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ABSTRACT

Relating directly or indirectly to studies of teacher concerns and conceptions about reading and the teaching of reading, the 54 references in this literature review were drawn from a number of sources published between 1965 and 1977. The review is presented according to the following content topic areas: general references, reading habits of teachers, reading teacher problems, teacher education, teacher attitudes, instructional approaches, teacher knowledge and reading ability, and children's conceptions of reading as related to teaching. (FL)

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TEACHERS' CONCERNS AND CONCEPTIONS OF READING AND THE TEACHING OF READING:

A LITERATURE REVIEW

Gabriella Belli, Gaston Blom, and Ann Reiser*

Introduction

This literature review is based on 64 references between the years 1965-1977. The references were obtained from a number of sources, including: (1) anrual summaries of investigations related to reading reported in the Reading Research Quarterly and the Journal of Educational Research from July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1975; (2) a few landmark studies on teachers, teacher training, and the status of reading instruction in elementary schools; (3) ongoing reports from the Education Commission of the States; (4) two ERIC searches for the years 1966-1976 dealing with teacher values and reading habits and teacher attitudes and reading habits; and (5) reports of the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study. From a total pool of 233 references and citations, 64 were selected that related directly or, more often, indirectly to studies of teachers "concerns" and "conceptions" about reading and the teaching of reading.

The 64 references were read and abstracted on cards, then sorted according to the following content topic areas: general references, reading habits of teachers, reading teacher problems, teacher education, teacher attitudes, instructional approaches, teacher knowledge and reading ability, and children's conceptions of reading as related to teaching. The literature review is presented according to these topical areas.

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General References

Ongoing studies of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (a project of the Education Commission of the States) have called attention to weaknesses in reading skills evident in representative populations of various age groups, including young adults. These evaluations are not based on standardized tests, but on specially designed performance measures that tap particular reading skill areas using a multiple choice format. Some of these skill areas are different from school achievement and grade level equivalent literacy yet are functionally important, e.g., reading newspapers, filling out job applications, and taking driver's license tests (National Assessment of Educational Progress Newsletter, October 1970). One publication (National Assessment of Educational Progress Newsletter, June 1973) cites a 1970 Louis Harris poll of a representative sample of a representative sample of four adult groups that measured the number of these adults that could fill out a series of basic application forms. Only 61% of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 could do everything the instructions on the applications asked (90-100% correct), and 18.5 million adults (14% of the adult population) were considered functionally illiterate (80% or less correct responses on application forms). Such findings suggest that some rather basic, practical, literacy application skills are being neglected in public educational programs.

Assessment findings cause one to reflect on how reading is taught and on the aspects emphasized. In addition to the discovery of adults' problems in filling out application forms there have been other provocative findings. One finding is that new English teachers have no expectations about the range of quality of children's, teenagers', and young adults' essays. This would seem to reflect a deficiency in their teacher training

and preparation (National Assessment of Educational Progress Newletter, December-January 1972-1973). A report on writing mechanics (National Assessment of Educational Progress, October 1975) published evaluation scores on essays written by 9, 13, and 17-year-olds over a period of five years. Declines in evaluation scores were found between the years 1968 and 1974. A number of interpretations of this decline were made, including: (1) Writing is tied to reading; if less reading were done in 1974, as has been demonstrated, then one would expect poorer writing. (2) There is probably less practice in writing; as classroom size increases, teachers have less time to read essays, and so fewer essays are assigned.

Besides interpreting the evaluation scores, the report then assessed the experienced English teachers who had scored the essays. It was suggested that perhaps their standards were outmoded and not necessarily better than the values of the students who wrote the essays. Furthermore, the report indicated that scorers' standards could be a form of dialect which indexes social aspiration; a decline in mastery of this dialect may reflect changing attitudes in society.

Regarding the study of literature in the schools, many English teachers express concern about the emphasis on cognitive rather than affective aspects in the study of literature. As for students, 20% of 17-year-olds in one study indicated that the study of literature is important for practical reasons, i.e. it improves grammar and speech and helps secure a job. Again, one would wonder if such pupil attitudes were a reflection of teacher attitudes, or an indication of teachers' failure to communicate other reasons for studying literature.

A national reading assessment completed in 1970-1971 obtained findings on a range of lower to higher order reading skills at four age levels

(National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1974). A surprising percentage of young adults between 26 and 35 years of age had difficulty with the lower order skills of following written directions (both simple and complex). Only 61% were able to satisfactorily draw a geometric figure. (Adult females had more difficulty with the exercise than adult males.) Even though exercises in following directions are not taught in schools, they are realistic measures of the ability to read with functional understanding.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress also found that adults had difficulty with the higher order reading skills of drawing inferences and critical reading. On three multiple choice questions about a written passage (drawing inference measures) only 29-46% of young adults between 26 and 35 years of age had correct responses, whereas 3-31% indicated that they did not know the answers. On measures of critical reading, 88% of young adults chose correct answers to interpreting signs, 52% correctly estimated an author's attitude, and 72% could discover the tone of a passage. The results on drawing inferences and critical reading can be contrasted to the relatively high median percentage of success (91%) on exercises of gleaning significant facts from passages. These results suggest something about the ways in which reading is taught and practiced in schools.

A broad study of the interactional influence of a large number of variables (teacher, pupil, school, etc.) on reading and mathematics achievment is now in progress (California State Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing and the National Institute of Education, undated). This study involves 2,700 children and 97 teachers in second and fifth grade classrooms across eight school districts in California. One of the study's long range goals is to determine what factors should be considered in teacher

preparation and licensing.

While a large amount of data from this study is still in the process of reduction and analysis, some preliminary findings relate to teachers' concerns, practices, and influences. The teachers participating in the study uniformly indicated that classroom experiences at various grade levels, in several subject areas, and with children of differing socioeconomic levels should be an early ingredient in teacher preparation. A systematic study of instructional practices in these teachers' classrooms reported findings relative to instructor role and to instructional aim, activities, and materials. Reading, particularly in second grade, was more likely to proceed by direct instruction rather than under student control. Most of the time the dominant aim of instruction was practicing old skills; relatively little time was spent on new ideas or topics. Only in fifth grade was a substantial amount of time devoted to application of knowledge beyond school content, while a great deal of time was also spent at seatwork. Workbooks were common everywhere, but they occupied a surprising amount of time in fifth grade reading and language arts.

Another finding from this study showed that high teacher expectations increased the achievement of the average student as much as one standard deviation, compared to a similar student receiving low expectation.

A large number of studies exist where it is possible to apply some of the concerns reported by teachers in general to teachers of reading. Fuller (1969) reviews his own studies and others of teachers' concerns at different periods in their own development: pre-student teaching, early and late student teaching, in-service beginning teaching, experienced teaching, and so-called superior teaching. The author interprets the findings of 33 such studies as indicative of a developmental progression from

teachers' early concerns about himself/herself (apprehension in general, control and management of the class, understanding subject matter, and being evaluated by authorities, parents, and pupils) to later concerns about pupils (understanding their capacities, individualizing objectives, and dealing with pupil differences).

Another literature review publication (Emans and Fox, 1973) focuses specifically on teacher behaviors in reading instruction in relation to method prescriptions, personality variables of teachers, and perceptions by teachers. The authors indicate that teachers communicate to children through their behaviors -- that "good" teaching behaviors are learned, and that "good" teaching behaviors can be identified and related to child achievement in reading. Concerning method prescriptions, studies are cited which indicate that the following behaviors are associated with higher reading achievement: a specific, clear, systematic approach to reading; a thinking approach to learning; sound-symbol emphasis; appropriate level of difficulty of lessons; adherence to the established teaching guidelines for an approach; and more interactive and individualized behaviors with children.

Personality variables of teachers are also discussed in relation to a model of combinations of love-hostility and autonomy-control dimensions that characterize democratic teachers as high love/low control, laissez-faire teachers as low love/low control, authoritarian teachers as low love/high control, and benevolent controlling teachers as high love/high control. While some studies indicate that a flexible range of teacher personality style is not easily achieved, the authors believe it can be achieved through instruction and that style differences should vary according to the nature of the learning task. For example, less teacher warmth

in the early grades can raise tension level and facilitate the learning of less complex tasks. In contrast, more abstract tasks are advanced with more teacher warmth. Differences in teacher style have been found in relation to boys (more evaluative) and to girls (more objective).

The review (Emans and Fox, 1973) also reports studies on the influence of teachers' perceptions of the ability level of children. Such perceptions result in different expectations and treatments of children, including differences in opportunities provided for response. For example, children perceived as high ability were allowed to give open answers to questions concerning comprehension, using divergent and reflective thinking. In contrast, children perceived as low ability had to provide objective answers with literal and specific response styles. Furthermore, the findings of some investigators indicate that teachers' perceptions of children's abilities are not based on objective information.

Teachers' attempts to individualize children may be important largely in terms of the kind of attention and treatment given to such differences. While the authors present evidence that varying teacher behaviors in reading can influence reading achievement, the findings are not easily summarized, nor are their implications for teacher preparation and education readily apparent.

Reading Habits of Teachers

The reading habits and interests of both in-service and preservice teachers have been the objects of a number of research studies.

Professional literature is not widely read by teachers, according to Hipple and Giblin (1971). Weintraub (1967) states that while teachers do read, the nature of that reading is questionable. By comparing two teacher groups, one in 1966 and one in 1972, Duffey (Note 1) reported an

increased interest in functional, practical, professional reading and a decline in critical reading of social issues. Yet, the striking similarity between the groups in two age periods was the number of non-reading teachers in both. Ilika (Note 2) stated that readership research indicates the number of books read by teachers is greater than that read by the general public even though 10 - 15% of teachers do not read books at all.

There have also been other studies on the amount of reading done by preservice teachers and by experienced practicing teachers. In assessing the amount of reading done by 120 future teachers Hawkins (1967) noted a steady decrease from freshman to senior year in college. Cogan (1975) found, however, that older teachers read more of seven selected periodicals than did the 20-30 age group. There seems to be evidence then that the amount of reading varies according to teacher age and the stage of their educational preparation.

Mueller (1973) stated that 40% of experienced and student teachers rated reading as fourth or lower on a list of seven normal life activities. With respect to the importance placed on reading in preparing pupils to use their leisure time more wisely, 40% of the undergraduate teachers and 24% of the graduate teachers ranked it third or lower. This indicates that the group values reading only mildly in their professional and personal lives. Since the samples for this study came from methods or in-service classes and were not randomly selected, the results may not be generalized to all teachers.

Perhaps one cause of the seemingly low interest in reading among teachers stems from a dislike of reading due to the inability to read well (Dinnan and Hafner, 1970). However, we should also consider that few studies compared results with readership of other groups. Those that did

found teachers to be reading more than the general public.

An interesting fact is the high correlation between teacher readership and school subscription (Cogan, 1975). The suggestion was made that schools provide reading materials and time for teachers to read them. We would add that this time could be incorporated with student reading time, illustrating to the students that reading is not merely a task to be learned, but something of value throughout life.

Reading Teacher Problems

While few studies were directly aimed at finding teachers' conceptions of reading, several studies yield information about teachers' major concerns regarding reading programs and their problems in the teaching of reading.

One frequently cited problem is the lack of adequate teaching and diagnostic materials (Flood and Zehm, 1975; Lichtman, 1973; Schubert, 1971). It is not clear, however, whether this complaint stems from a shortage of raterials due to restrictive school budgets or from the teachers' lack of knowledge about the availability and usefulness of such materials. The studies conclude that in-service programs are essential to aid teachers in their use of reading materials and, particularly, diagnostic tests.

Teachers are also concerned with the quality of pre and in-service training programs(Goodacre and Clark, 1971; Lichtman, 1973). A number of teachers' concerns relate to their preparation, and they mention having difficulty in the following areas:

1) finding enough time to do the job
2) meeting individual reading needs
3) Providing meaningful seatwork
4) diagnosing reading problems
5) motivating students to read
6) getting students to use word attack skills

It is conceivable that with better teacher preparation many of these prob-

lems could be reduced.

Lichtman (1973) concluded that neither reading method nor type of material selected makes a significant difference in reading instruction. According to 31 professional educators interviewed, major emphasis for improvement of reading instruction should be placed on upgrading the quality of teaching. Methodological research should be de-emphasized in favor of greater attention to overall teacher excellence.

It would seem from these studies that teachers' conceptions of reading center primarily on functional levels. Their comments deal mostly with daily problems rather than focusing on reading processes.

Teacher Education

The implications for the improvement of teacher education evidenced earlier in this review are reinforced by analyzing the quality of that education.

From an examination of college and university programs Austin and Morrison (1961) reported that 3% of the programs do not require prosepective elementary school teachers to enroll in any course on the teaching of reading, and that when reading is taught with other subjects, as in 50% of the colleges, only a fraction of the time is devoted to reading. Also, intermediate grade reading skills are usually omitted or treated cursorily.

A follow-up of this 1961 study (Morrison and Austin, 1977) indicates that prospective elementary teachers now receive at least three semester hours in reading instruction in 94% of the colleges and universities surveyed. Many colleges are now requiring a second or third course in reading, including content that was formerly taught at the graduate level. Basic reading courses frequently include intermediate and upper grade con-

tent and techniques of instruction. There are also more courses, a greater emphasis on competency based performances, greater use of the public school setting, and more observation and tutorial exposures.

While a majority of the recommendations from the 1961 study of college preparation for elementary teachers in reading (The Torch Lighters) have been implemented to a significant degree, there has been less change in other aspects of teacher preparation for reading instruction. These static aspects are most notable in practice teaching, which the authors consider the heart of a teacher education program. They include: insufficient planning and cooperation between supervising teachers in schools and faculty in colleges; less than adequate assessment of practice teaching performance; and insufficient attention to exit requirements for elementary student teachers. The authors conclude that while improvements and changes have occurred in teacher preparation, there is still room for further progress.

Dinna and Hafner (1970) used a combination of five tests and inventories to assess educational background and competency of 103 students who had just one semester to complete before student teaching. Results showed that many of the individuals had problems in various reading skills, performed poorly on reading tests, and did limited personal reading. The authors argued for upgrading both the selection and preparation of future teachers. Unfortunately, a control group was not used so comparisons between this group and other college students cannot be made.

A survey of 488 elementary school teachers in Austin, Texas (Rutherford and Weaver, 1967) concerning teachers' initial and continuing preparation for reading instruction identified the following areas where a need for information was indicated:

1) diagnosing individual instructional needs
2) meeting the needs of the disabled reader
3) methodology

This supports the previously cited studies on teachers' problems, reinforcing the need for improvement in training reading teachers.

In summarizing research on the relative effectiveness of reading programs Rutherford (1971) stated that no approach emerged as superior, but that the value of a good teacher was continually revealed. He listed questions concerning good teachers that he suggests should be researched, such as:

1) What are the cognitive and affective teacher traits that contribute to maximum student achievement?

2) What type of training and/or experience are necessary to develop these traits in teachers?

3) What are the aspects of teacher performance that promote success?

In conclusion, reading interest among teachers seems low, but it is usually higher than that of the general public. Also, problems in teaching reading are of a pragmatic nature, and complaints rest with the quality of teacher education. Research has shown that teacher education is deficient. There is a need to improve training programs so they will produce competent teachers who have an active interest in reading. Perhaps attention should also be directed toward a more selective screening of persons entering teacher training programs.

Teacher Attitudes

Since the attitudes of teachers have a determinative effect on the classroom program, it is important to look at the attitudes and beliefs of reading teachers.

Studying the beliefs of radically different reading programs can shed

light on the connection between the values a teacher holds and how she/he teaches. Mayes (1974) investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs and degree of open-mindedness and the kind of reading program they use. Several questions were considered: are the beliefs of teachers using basal readers the same as those using the Distar reading program? Are the two groups of teachers equally open-minded? It was hypothesized that teachers using basal readers would score higher on measures of experimentalist beliefs and would be more open-minded than the Distar teachers.

Twenty first grade reading teachers in Brooklyn, New York (ten basal and ten Distar) responded to three inventories: (1) the Teacher Practices Inventory, (2) the Personal Beliefs Inventory, and (3) the Dogmatism Scale. Results showed that the Distar teachers tended to be more in agreement with Dewey's educational beliefs than the basal reader teachers. The Distar teachers also tended to score lower on the Dogmatism scale than the basal reader teachers, i.e. were more open-minded. While these differences were noted, the major conslusion of this research is that there are no significant differences in beliefs or degree of open-mindedness between teachers of the Distar reading program and teachers of basal reader programs. The author concludes that since values do not differ, the actual ways of teaching would have commonality. Therefore, to achieve a different method of teaching, one must change the values of the teacher.

Good and Brophy (1971) studied differential teacher behavior evidenced during reading instruction involving both high and low achieving students. Three boys and three girls ranked high achievers and a similar number ranked low by teachers in each of four first grade classrooms were selected for study. Four hours of reading instruction were coded and analyzed --- turns at reading, teacher-afforded and pupil-initiated responses, quality

of response, and type of teacher feedback. Differential treatment favored high over low achievers. Data from all classroom activity revealed that while boys produced more correct answers than girls, they still received more criticism. This was especially true of low achieving boys. The high level of criticism towards boys was attributed to their classroom behavior. Stanford achievement test data in May (the year of the study) showed no significant sex differences in reading achievement, though small reading achievement differences favored girls.

Researchers have also been interested in the effects on children of grouping by ability In many situations, grouping by ability for instruction in reading is so well established that it is a little-questioned practice. More recently, however, individuals have questioned this practice and are studying its effects on students. To date, there is very little significant research on this subject.

"Do teachers of reading, not unlike others in our society, prefer to teach the more talented readers?" This question formed the basis of a study by Miller and Hering (1975). A form they developed with a misleading title requested 26 first grade teachers to list their students, noting each student's reading group assignment. (More than 600 children were included in the study.) A month later the teachers were instructed to list their children in the order of their preference for teaching them to read. The results of the study support what educators and others have suspected for quite some time; teachers prefer teaching the better readers.

In a recent article, Cadenhead (1976) adapted an activity from A Handbook for Faculty Development (Quehl, 1975) to determine teachers' beliefs about reading instruction. The activity includes 60 statements which reflect various points of view about reading and reading instruction. The

60 statements were typed on cards. Through a process of group interaction the participants began to clarify and articulate their assumptions about teaching reading and develop a profile of their own teaching style.

In a study by Artley (Note 3), 100 junior and senior education majors in basic reading methods courses were asked to make a written response to the following:

1) From what you recall, what did your teachers (on any level) do that you feel promoted your competence and interest in reading?

2) Was there anything your teachers did that detracted from your interest in reading?

3) Was there someone or something besides your teacher who contributed to your competence and interest in reading?

The results indicated a large number of students who could recall little their teachers did that contributed to their reading development. Some reported that the reading done by their teachers to the class was the thing they enjoyed most. Others cited free time scheduled daily or weekly for personal reading, variety in the day's schedule of events and breaking of a stereotyped pattern of instruction (dramatizations, puppetry, games, puzzles, audiovisual aids, art, music activities, and creative writing), stimulation for reading obtained from the sheer fun of experiencing an abundance of good things to read, and teacher enthusiasm, personality, and attitudes toward reading.

In response to the question concerning teachers' activities that detracted from reading, students cited the reading period that was a "stereotyped activity," i.e. roundrobin reading, factual questions, phonic drills, and workbook activities repeated daily with no variation. Many of the education students frowned on competitive activities and extrinsic rewards and on being "frozen" into reading groups.

Parents and family were considered to be major contributors to the student's competence and interest in reading, as were teachers who sensed the importance of reading as a vital force in the development of young people. Teachers who viewed reading as the most important activity they would carry on during the day and were able to convey that conviction through their enthusiasm and creative teaching produced students who were most likely to enjoy reading and become efficient readers.

Instructional Approaches

In an experimental study of 14 teachers, Chall and Feldman (1966) did an analysis of an eclectic basal reader approach. Instruments were devised to determine how teachers viewed the basal reader method (meaning vs. decoding), how they implemented it in the classroom, and whether their differences in implementation affected the reading achievement of their pupils.

The study, although largely exploratory, supported the general observation that teachers using one method vary in their implementation of that method, that these differences in implementation can be observed reliably, and that the observed practices are not related to those the teachers themselves reported. Several teacher characteristics were found to be significantly associated with teaching achievement at the end of first grade. There was some evidence that reading competence, a thinking approach to learning, a sound-symbol emphasis in reading, and the use of appropriate levels of lessons were positively related to reading achievement for this particular sample of children and teachers.

It appears from this study that what teachers do makes a difference in pupil achievement, even when teachers' initial skills and teaching experience are accounted for. The authors stated that standardized reading

tests tend to measure literal comprehension skills, making it difficult to widely assess pupils' abilities in various reading-thinking areas.

Based on observational and interview data from elementary public school classrooms, Harste and Burke (Note 4) determined that one can identify distinctive and consistent ways in which students approach learning to read and in which teachers approach reading instruction. Using an information processing model, these authors can identify the theoretical orientation of student and teacher by studying decision making, goal selection, and information use. Instruments and procedures have been developed to study these reading processes. Findings have been reported on three common and current views of reading: sound-symbol or decoding orientation, skills orientation using the four language arts in developing skill hierarchies, and whole language orientation. Harst and Burke indicate that student reading performance in part mirrors the nature of current instruction and also reflects the student's history of instruction.

A recently published study (Cunningham, Arthur, and Cunningham, 1977) followed a class of 24 children from kindergarten to fifth grade. The class was exposed to various approaches in reading instruction each year. Teachers in this school had ongoing in-service observations of classrooms where instructional approaches other than their own were demonstrated. The teachers also kept a monthly journal of their teaching strategies, classroom organization, and successes and failures. The study revealed that some teachers successfully use their own approach to reading instruction but make adaptations to the types of students they have. According to this study, then, it is teacher adaptiveness and classroom awareness rather than instructional approach that makes the difference.

Guszak (1967) examined the interaction between teachers and students

in the reading circle as they engage in the development of reading-thinking skills. Observation and study were guided by the following questions:

1) What kinds of thinking questions do teachers ask about reading assignments in selected second, fourth, and sixth grade classrooms? In what frequencies do the various question types occur?

2) How frequently are teacher questions about reading assignments met with congruent or correct student responses?

3) Do teachers employ certain questioning strategies as they question students about reading assignments? If so, what are the characteristics of these strategies?

Students were sensitive to "what teachers want" and generally did a good job of supplying it. This was evident from the reading questions which students were asked to answer in this study. Over 90% of all literal comprehension questions were met with congruent responses on the first student try. Students had learned quite well to parrot back a recollection of details.

Before teachers can employ more comprehensive questioning patterns, they must know the nature of these patterns. Reading series should clearly spell out their comprehension structures in such a way that classroom teachers can understand their task in comprehension development in reading.

Reading practices in open classrooms were examined by Rothstein and Gold (1974). They found that in an open classroom, reading is not viewed as a separate subject, but treated as an integrated part of the total curriculum. Reading serves as a vehicle for the intellectual life of the class. Skills are developed with the expectation that they will be applied.

Wiener (1974) developed a questionnaire that was distributed to more than 500 open classroom teachers. Also, classroom visits were made to validate the questionnaire responses and to observe reading instruction. Studies showed that reading instruction and programs have changed to meet the needs

of the open environment. The greatest change appears to be in the types of grouping for instruction.

Askov (1971) developed an instrument for measuring teachers' attitudes toward individualized reading instruction. The instrument was described as being extremely helpful in the studies of individualized approaches to reading instruction.

An intensive analysis of British infant schools that were successful or unsuccessful in terms of students' reading readiness and later reading attainment scores was undertaken by Cane and Smithers (1971). They found that in unsuccessful schools there was a lack of systematic instruction. Teachers waited for spontaneous reading interest and there were few periods of regular reading. Also, teachers in these schools favored activity and creative work over organized learning, and there was a low degree of teacher direction. In successful schools reading instruction was organized and recognized from the start with early phonic instruction. and there was a high degree of teacher instruction.

Teachers of young children have long believed that mothers and fathers should read to their children. Guinagh and Jester (1972) were involved in the evaluation of two parent-child centers. Since one of the basic goals of the centers was to enhance the teaching skills of the parent, it was deemed necessary to obtain some measure of the quality of the teaching interaction. The instrument developed rated parent-child interaction as the parent showed the child a story book. There was a great deal of variability in the way parents showed the book to their children, ranging from animated reading and very complete and thorough descriptions of the actions and noises to be found in each photograph to a rather perfunctory series of questions or comments.

The parent-child interaction instrument seems extremely useful, easy to administer and appears to be non-threatening to the parents. It may also serve as a guide to help parents develop skills in reading to their children. Reading may then become an activity which is maintained because it is enjoyed. This instrument could also be a valuable guide in the development of teacher-student interaction with books.

Teacher Knowledge and Reading Ability

There is a face validity in the statement that effective practice in the teaching of reading cannot be accomplished without an understanding of what it is one is teaching even though this may not always be reflected in teacher classroom behavior (practice). Kingston, Brosier, and Hsu (1975) studied the validity of an inventory of teacher knowledge of reading on primary elementary levels. The inventory, developed by Artley and Hardin (1971), contained 95 items which sample seven areas included as content in methods courses and considered to be major factors in reading pedagogy. The seven areas are: reading readiness; word perception; comprehension and critical reading; differentiating reading instruction; silent and oral reading; evaluation, diagnosis, and correction; and goals of instruction.

The inventory was validated by determining if observable differences existed between preservice and experienced teachers, and among experienced elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and reading specialists. Differences did exist in expected directions based on reading knowledge and/or experience. Reading specialists attained the highest mean score of all groups. However, a correlation matrix and a factor analysis of the inventory indicated a lack of common variance and a factor structure not supporting the seven components of the inventory. While the inventory is comparatively valid and discriminates between teacher groups, it may not be constructed

on bonafide factors, or it may not measure them accurately. The authors conclude that reading knowledge is complex and difficult to assess.

More specific areas of teacher knowledge have also been reported. Jorgensen (1975) studies the ability of 84 elementary school teachers to estimate the grade level equivalents of reading paragraphs selected from the reading inventory of the Betts Basic Readers published in 1964. Teachers varied widely in their judgments of difficulty level of paragraphs from various grades. Urban teachers made higher estimates of grade level than suburban teachers, perhaps based on the reading performance of the students they taught or on lower standards of performance. The author suggests that differences in teacher judgment may reflect performance expectations of students and thereby the quality of reading instruction.

One study of teacher knowledge of phonic principles indicated that teachers in a graduate level reading course were not able to provide illustrations of phonic principles for 20 out of 37 examples (54%). However, a large percent of the omissions (76%) came from generalizations with a low utility value (Fleming, 1972).

Another study (Ebermein and Franke, Note 5,) demonstrated that teachers can use their knowledge of phonic generalizations to pronounce unknown nonsense words. A group of elementary pre and in-service classroom teachers pronounced a little over half of the nonsense word list with preservice teachers performing better than in-service classroom teachers. While these two studies suggest a lack of teacher knowledge about phonics (more so for experienced teachers), it is difficult to interpret the importance of these findings to adequacy of teacher reading instruction.

Critical reading ability of classroom teachers was studied by Alston (1972). Older and more experienced teachers were associated with a decrease

in critical reading. No influences were noted from the number of reading courses taken by subjects, geographic setting, and teacher grade. The subject sample, however, consisted of elementary, junior high, and senior high teachers enrolled in graduate level reading courses in a black university. It is therefore difficult to generalize the results of these findings to other teacher groups. The national assessment of reading findings point to low critical reading ability in all four age groups studied (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1974) which might be associated with a lack of emphasis on teaching critical reading and a deficiency of this ability in teachers as well.

Burnett (1963) reported little difference between practicing teachers and undergraduates in their ability to diagnose typical reading problems. Seven years later he found that the diagnostic performance of experienced teachers was only slightly higher than that of student teachers (Burnett, 1970).

In a number of publications the possibility is mentioned that elementary teachers may lack literacy skills. Only one study reports functional literacy skills of teachers; this is from a selected sample of 108 southern teachers (Geeslin and York, 1970-1971). The mean result ranged from 8.8 grade level to above norm on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Lowest scores were associated with teachers of disadvantaged pupils and highest with teachers and administrators of in-service reading programs.

Lack of knowledge of reading skills by subject area teachers was reported by Bramm and Walter (1973). Eighty-one teachers in nine different content areas were surveyed to find the extent of their awareness of reading skills necessary for students to effectively read subject matter material. Most of the subject area teachers were unaware of the necessary read-

ing skills. A study in 1964 by the same author reported similar findings.

Children's Conceptions of Reading as Related to Thinking

A teacher's conception of the place of reading in education, and hence the way he/she talks about it to the child, is a major influence in developing a child's conception of reading.

Research on children's thinking (Downing, 1969) indicated important conclusion about teaching reading. Children's thoughts about reading and their notions or conceptions of its purpose and nature present a fundamental problem for the teacher of reading. The young child's ways of thinking are extremely different from those of adults. This difference in logic of young children causes two difficulties in teaching them to read and write; (1) difficulty in understanding the purpose of written language and (2) problems with abstract technical terms used by teachers in talking about written or spoken language. Teaching formal rules of phonics or grammar is unnecessary and may cause reading difficulties.

In a more recent unpublished paper Downing (Note 6) further elaborates that the critical factor in developing reading skill may be the child's clarity of thought in the reasoning and problem-solving tasks involved in learning how to read. Evidence from Piaget on egocentric speech would indicate that the school beginner has not perceived communication as a problem and has not thought about its functions or techniques.

The development of a linguistic reasoning process in analyzing, abstracting, and generalizing may be fundamental to learning to read as an understandable task. A cognitive aspect is perhaps critical in the child's problem-solving work in understanding reading instruction as well.

Another problem-solving task in learning to read is understanding linguistic concepts needed for reasoning about the relationships between speech

and writing. Studies on young school children's concepts of word and sound typically show cognitive confusion and uncertainty. A technical linguistic vocabulary is closely related to the readin process. A test of technical language literacy devised by Downing and others is highly correlated with traditional tests of reading readiness.

There appears to be considerable individual variation in linguistic awareness among children. It probably develops in a natural way through playful manipulation of sounds and elements of language. Downing (Note 6) proposes that both meaning and coding approaches be used in reading instruction along with training procedures which enhance linguistic awareness. He suggests a cognitive clarity theory of learning to read giving equal weight to both meaning and code with the addition of developing understanding of the reading task - its purpose and technical characteristics.

How children think about reading is notably under-researched, and comparatively few articles have been published in the journals. Yet research on childre:'s failure in reading concludes that it is a breakdown in the thinking process in learning to read which appears to be the real problem.

In an exploratory investigation Johns and Johns (1971) suggested that children's concepts of reading be compared to their reading ability. A subsequent study (Johns, 1972) found a significant positive correlation between children's concepts of reading and their reading achievement.

In 1975 Johns did a study to compare the concepts of reading given by children defined as good readers and poor readers. The sample was composed of 103 fourth and fifth grade students in a small mid-western university community. The students were interviewed individually and asked, "What is reading?" The responses were classified into five categories. The students were given a Gates-MacGinitie reading comprehension test and, based

on grade equivalent scores, were identified as good and poor readers.

A good reader was defined as a student reading a year or more above his grade placement. A poor reader was defined as a student reading a year or more below his grade placement. The results indicated that good and poor readers differ significantly in their concepts of reading. A poor reader gave no response to a definition of reading or indicated he/she did not know, produced vague ideas or connected it with classroom activities. Good readers indicated reading was recognizing words, providing meaning and understanding, and recognizing words and meaning.

Although it is difficult to investigate children's concepts of reading, Downing (1969), Denny and Weintraub (1963), and others have made probes in this area which may indicate an interest and concern for further investigation. It would appear that classroom teachers need to have thorough knowledge and concept about the reading process and be able to communicate a better understanding of that concept to children.

Critique of Literature Review

A review of the reading research literature over the past twelve years indicates a paucity of studies which directly focus on the teachers' conceptions of reading and of reading instruction. The inadequacy of preservice education, clinical supervision, and in-service training in reading still remains a concern of teachers. Teachers are also concerned about the specifics, such as how to individualize reading instruction, motivate students, manage classrooms, find time to do their work, deal with students of low reading abilities, understand disabled readers, obtain suitable materials, and use remedial procedures.

Teachers appear to lack knowledge of and competence in reading concepts (phonics, terms, instructional elements, and critical reading). Also,

there is strikingly little literature which stresses the importance of teacher understanding of children in psychological growth and development terms and of teacher recognition of what children bring to the reading situation. The teaching of reading for many teachers may be a required performance or a mechanical skill lacking in significance, interest, pleasure, or meaning. Thus, the significance of reading is not communicated to students. The emphasis on hows and whys and on fixing problems overlooks reading as a holistic process and neglects the development of particular models of reading for the teacher on which decisions are made and specific knowledge flows.

Many teachers tend to read little professional or nonprofessional literature, and there is some evidence that a number of elementary teachers have reading difficulties. It should be recognized, however, that the amount of reading done by practicing professionals other than teachers may also be quite limited. Furthermore, the behavior of a significant minority of teachers may convey a generalized finding for the entire group that is not accurate.

One gains the impression that reading researchers are caught up in a search for a specific list of attributes, skills, methods, and teacher personality variables that constitute the effective reading teacher. This search neglects the importance of a conceptual base for reading from which specifics flow or into which specifics fit. Many studies cited in this literature review were deficient in other respects. They contained impressionistic statements, unsystematic procedures, biased and specifically selected subject samples, and no control or comparison groups.

Implications of Literature to Research Direction

The effective teacher seems to be one who views reading in its re-

lation to overall language and communication skills. He or she uses a wealth of materials and resources to teach skills necessary for successful reading. These skills are viewed as a means to achieve an end -- the application of reading to broaden one's knowledge, to aid in communication, and to develop the ability of enjoyment through reading.

It would seem that many teachers have a limited conception of the reading process yet want a set of materials and prescriptions that will provide an excellent reading program for their students.

We see a need for research to explore conceptions teachers have of the entire reading process, including teachers' knowledge of specific methodologies. To date, this aspect of teaching remains largely unexamined. The results of such investigations may clarify the question, "Who is the effective reading teacher?" and possibly improve preservice and in-service teacher education programs to facilitate the training of effective reading teachers.

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